

Nov. 1908.

Comet Committee.

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ultimately in addition to the names; and any artificial equivalent for co-ordinates would be a *third* system in use.

The decisions of the Committee will be taken in the light of these opinions, for which we are grateful to the writers. At present we are still without a chairman, though the appointment is under consideration by the Accademia dei Lincei, as leading academy for the time being.

H. H. TURNER,
*Secretary to the Committee
on Lunar Nomenclature.*

University Observatory, Oxford:
1908 October 26.

Comet Committee.

The following communication has been received from Professor Barnard :—

“The Astronomical and Astrophysical Society of America, at its meeting last August, appointed a committee on comets, consisting of—

GEORGE C. COMSTOCK, *Chairman.*
EDWARD E. BARNARD.
CHARLES D. PERRINE.
EDWARD C. PICKERING.

“The committee proposes to assist in making as effective as possible, co-operation in the physical study of comets, and especially with respect to the coming apparition of Halley’s comet.”

Note on the Regnal Years in the Aramaic Papyri from Assuan.

By E. B. Knobel.

In my paper on these papyri published in the *Monthly Notices* for March 1908, I referred to the regnal years of the kings of Persia, but without attempting any explanation as to how those years were reckoned. It is important to investigate the question, as the calendar dates must necessarily depend upon the determination of the accession of the kings, whence the commencement of the regnal years can be fixed.

Regnal years at this period appear to have been reckoned in three different ways. First, they were determined from the accession of the king precisely as the regnal years in this country: Oppert states that this system was used in Assyria, and was that adopted in the Bible; secondly, they were reckoned as beginning on the 1st. Nisan following the accession; and thirdly, the regnal years were considered to commence with the 1st. Thoth of Nabonassarean and Egyptian years preceding the actual accession. This is the system adopted in Ptolemy's canon.

The records which enable us to determine the dates of accession of the kings from Xerxes the Great to Darius Nothus are fairly clear.

Xerxes the Great.

Fynes Clinton (*Fasti Hellenici*) states that the accession of Xerxes was about the spring of B.C. 485. Oppert, however, has called attention to a Babylonian tablet which records that Darius Hystaspes, the father of Xerxes, was living September B.C. 485, and he concludes definitely that the accession of Xerxes was in the autumn of that year.* I think this may be accepted as the true period of his accession.

Artabanus.

Xerxes was assassinated by Artabanus in the beginning of the archonship of Lysitheus—the 4th. year of the 78th. Olympiad. The commencement of this archonship is well determined as July B.C. 465, consequently the accession of Artabanus can be fixed as July or August B.C. 465.

Artaxerxes Longimanus.

Artabanus reigned for seven months, on which all authorities agree, which brings us to February B.C. 464, when he was killed by Artaxerxes, whose accession is thus fixed with considerable accuracy.†

* “La fixation exacte de la chronologie des derniers rois de Babylone.”

† Thucydides records that in the 4th. year of the 78th. Olympiad, July B.C. 465 to June B.C. 464, Themistocles went up the country with one of the Persians who dwelt on the coast, and sent a letter to Artaxerxes, the son of Xerxes, who had just succeeded to the throne. This journey would probably be made in the winter, and not in the summer.